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Charivaria

"WHAT is the cheapest way to see Europe?" inquires a reader. He might join the German Army.

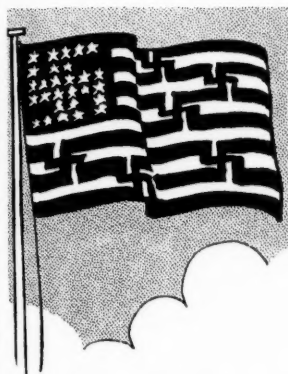
"He asked for an explanation from the Managers of the Managers of the Valletta City club."—*Malta Paper*.

This seems to settle the old "Quis custodiet?" difficulty.

A poet laments the fact that there is no satisfactory rhyme to "burbles." We suppose "Goebbels" wouldn't do?

"Following yesterday's meeting of the Cabinet, Viscount Halifax is now actively considering arrangements for summoning a conference."—*Daily Mail*.

Possibly with a view to energetically contemplating the situation in Central Europe.



A thief was arrested recently for stealing ten shillings from a journalist. It is not known where the journalist got the money.

"HITLER is not ignoring America," says a student of power politics. Of course not. The world is round and if he goes on pushing steadily eastwards . . .

A golfer says that he recently holed out in one, and later on in the same day was married. Well, he could hardly have expected his luck to hold.

"Mr. Bose . . . expresses the joy of the Congress at the success of Mr. Gandhi's mission and also his own feeling of happiness.

The President then refers to the events leading to the resignation of the Working Committee, and says that in the extraordinary circumstances in which he finds himself his dress has to be very brief."

Indian Paper.

Like GANDHI'S.

"The worst part of the flu is the feeling of dreadful depression," says a medical writer. This is caused by the patient's foreboding that when he's well enough to eat grapes somebody will bring him some and eat them.



A German journalist writes that HITLER always rises at 5 A.M. Which reminds us that his predecessor gets up at Doorn.

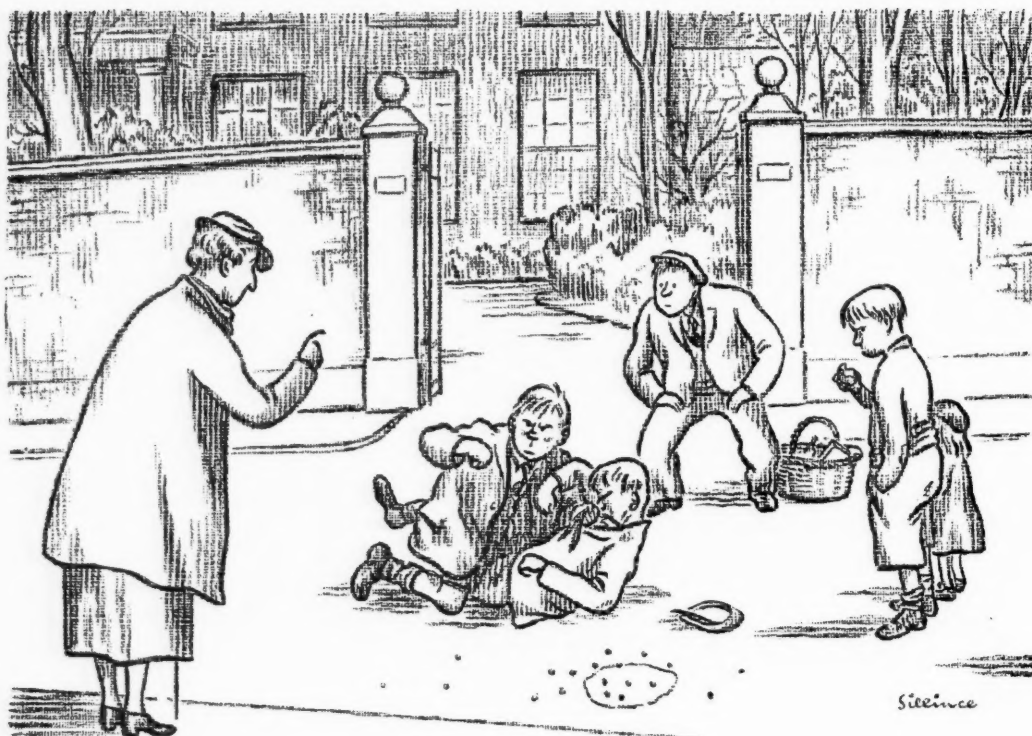
"In some distant day of the future it is quite likely that the kiddies will be checking up on Hedy of Hollywood instead of Helen of Troy. Hedy, unlike Helen, is not the type to hide herself in a horse."

Film Magazine.

Really, Helen!—with all those Greeks.

"How many hikers will obey the many 'Leave No Litter' notices this spring?" wonders a correspondent. Oh, a tidy few, we expect.





"Come, come. Have neither of you boys heard of arbitration?"
 "Garn, 'oppit! Ain't you never 'eard of non-intervention?"

Young Seymour's Lapse

THE trouble with young Seymour is that he is far too impressionable to make a good reporter. On *The Gampford Times* we pride ourselves on sticking to the facts and we leave all the high-flown nonsense to the London papers. If we report that a man has fallen down a well our readers know that he has fallen down a well, and if we report that a man is going to leave no stone unturned our readers understand at once that he is a geologist or a collector of beetles or someone else with a special interest in turning over stones. But young Seymour doesn't seem to know what a fact is, and after his last exploit we are beginning to wonder whether he will ever make good on *The Gampford Times*.

As I expect everyone knows, we in Gampford are very keen on culture. We recognise it as the sort of thing that no progressive town can do without, and consequently this paper has always been a very strong supporter of it. But even so we always stick to facts and avoid expressing any controversial opinions of our own. We report the views of some acknowledged expert on the subject.

Well just lately we have been doing a sort of review of the whole subject of culture in Gampford, and young Seymour was told off to do the drama. We haven't got a

proper theatre in Gampford now because the Grand was turned into a picture-house a long time ago; but it is, we feel, one of the finest and most progressive picture-houses in the country. What young Seymour had to do was to go to the manager of the Grand and get his views on the drama in Gampford. It was a very simple job and could really have been done in the office without anyone going to the Grand at all. Obviously one would have to comment on the astonishing success that had crowned the efforts of Mr. H. F. Blackman, manager of the Grand Theatre, Gampford, to improve the taste of the public. One would have to get Mr. Blackman's considered opinion that Gampford audiences were second to none, and one would have to get him to draw an illuminating comparison between them and the dull and apathetic audiences of London.

Well all this was explained to young Seymour and off he set for the Grand Theatre. We have only got his word for what happened after that, but, according to him, when he got there and went round to the manager's office at the back the interview started off swimmingly. The manager in modest but straightforward tones explained how greatly the taste of the public had improved since he took charge of the Grand Theatre. And to add point to his words

the cinema could be heard booming out before a packed audience an enthralling romance of the American underworld which put forward the novel thesis that the most hardened criminal could be reformed through the refining influence of a woman's love. It was a play, in fact, to make one think, and that was just what Mr. Blackman was claiming as his policy.

And then, unfortunately, the manager went round to his front office to get a list of his forthcoming attractions, leaving young Seymour alone in the room. And when young Seymour started to look round he realised where he was. At one end of the room was a tarnished gilt mirror and at the other was a shabby old settee in crimson silk. Hanging on the wall was a signed photograph of Sir Henry Irving inscribed "To my good friends at Gampford," and there was a framed playbill announcing that the incomparable Sarah Siddons would appear at the Grand Theatre, Gampford, in the successful play *Macbeth*, by W. Shakespeare, to be preceded by a highly laughable farce entitled *Husbands for Sale*. The office, in fact—as anyone could have told him—had been the stars' dressing-room in the days when the Grand was a struggling theatre instead of a modernised and highly successful cinema.

THE discovery seems to have had a curious effect on young Seymour. He declares that he suddenly heard all sorts of voices talking at him at once; but you never really know when he is confining himself to facts. He says that when the manager got back the voice of Henry Irving was thundering out *The Bells!* and that the manager began arguing that the real title was *Hell's Belles* and that it was a rollicking comedy of the American Navy. He says that Mrs. Siddons was sitting on the crimson silk settee and that she was crying, "Farewell, ye brutes, the Temple of Thespis is no more!"; and from somewhere in the background the voice of Glucose Cane, known to Gampford as the world's finest screen actor, was bellowing at the audience, "Say, I guess there's sump'n pretty swell 'bout larve"; and all sorts of other voices were drifting down from various odd corners of the office. Villains snarled and heroines sobbed and heroes declaimed powerful passages. And these voices, says young Seymour, were all so real that you might have thought that they belonged to living people and that the manager was the only one who was dead.

But our belief is that this is just young Seymour's excuse—and a pretty poor excuse at that. What obviously happened was that he allowed his mind to wander while Mr. Blackman was describing the intense intellectual effort and continuous striving after perfection which is necessary nowadays for the running of a super cinema; because he says that he didn't get this impression at all, whereas we know that it is one of Mr. Blackman's favourite themes.

And so when it came to writing out his copy young Seymour had to fall back on the old trick of junior reporters who have failed to get the views of an expert. He padded out his story with views of his own. But even then he made two gross errors which one would have thought the most junior of reporters could have avoided. In the first place he gave all the wrong views, and in the second he gave them in that high-flown language which is apt to be so misleading and which in this case was to have disastrous consequences.

"From 2.30 P.M. onwards," his rigmarole started, "the shade of Mrs. Siddons is tortured daily at the Grand Theatre, Gampford. The muted protests of Henry Irving fall upon deaf ears . . ." and so on.

Knowing young Seymour one can see vaguely what he was trying to say, but one can hardly blame the sub-

editors for the way they handled the story. They got young Seymour's copy along with a whole lot of the usual careful straightforward reporting which they have learnt to expect from our staff, and they failed to allow enough for young Seymour's impressionable nature and contempt for facts. Not unnaturally, we feel, they assumed that his story was a badly-written account of police-court proceedings in Gampford. They headed it "Woman Tortured in Theatre," "Deaf Mute's Protests" and "Grave Charges against Well-known Gampford Man"; and they then rewrote the story from what they too rashly assumed to be the facts.

SO now for the first time in its long and honourable career *The Gampford Times* is facing a libel action, and it seems fairly obvious that we haven't got a leg to stand on. The opinion of the general public is that the paper has struck an underhand blow at culture from which it will take Gampford years to recover, and all advertising from the Grand Theatre has been stopped. All we can hope is that the affair will prove a salutary lesson for young reporters who want to try out a high-flown literary style on dramatic criticisms.

H. W. M.

Reverie

"O marvellous Mother Nature," muse I often
(Sitting at gaze in tramcar, bus or train),
"Who can not only, from the same few features,
Form countless different faces for her creatures,
But can make nearly all of them so plain!"



"I suppose the next expense will be a new basket for Conqueror."

Is Hitler Dead?

BATTERTHWAITE said he was, and I said he wasn't, and that this was the eighth time Batterthwaite had said so, and he had got it all out of an American book, and anyhow Hitler had just made a long speech, and Batterthwaite said it was a gramophone record made especially to screech like Hitler, and I said that if Hitler was really dead we should have heard about it long ago, and there would have been all sorts of ceremonies and obsequies and poems in the German papers—solemn and lofty ones urging people to bury the great crook with an Empire's acclamation, or sad and wistful ones where the poet tells the people what flowers to cast on the dead man's tomb, and what flowers not to cast, because this takes up nearly three-quarters of the poem, and the poet doesn't know very much about the dead man and possibly didn't like him very much, but he does know the names of a great many flowers, especially wild ones, this being part of every poet's training, and Batterthwaite said that of course the death of Hitler had to be concealed from Germany; and I said I had seen photographs of Hitler standing at a window in Prague and meditating like the Minotaur, and driving through the streets, and receiving a bunch of seaweed from the daughter of the Mayor of Memel or Danzig or somewhere, and Batterthwaite then said:

"That was only the stand-in."

He went on to say that Hitler had always had a stand-in for the purpose of spontaneous popular rejoicing in foreign capitals, because you could never be sure that somebody in the crowd hadn't got a sawn-off shot-gun or a bomb in his overcoat pocket, but the stand-in was

somebody out of a concentration camp for whom the Nazis had no use, and if he happened to be hit they could either exploit the great indignation that would follow, if any did, or else pretend that he had made a miraculous recovery, which would give him a stronger position than ever.

"In fact," said Batterthwaite, "I dare say the stand-in has been hit several times already. Probably several have been killed and the Nazis have had to get new ones."

"I shouldn't," he said, "put anything beyond the Nazis, especially a chap like Ribbentrop." So I asked whether there had ever been a real Hitler at all, and Batterthwaite said there had been up to the time of the Munich Agreement, and this was one of his proofs that the real Hitler was dead, because no one would go back on his word so blatantly as that, without any sort of justification, and it was a further proof that when Hitler, or to be accurate, the pseudo-Hitler interviewed the Czech President he just put a typewritten document in front of him, signed his name with a scrawl and went out of the room, leaving a lot of generals and other fellows to stick pins and fountain-pens into the President for five hours until he signed up too.

"The real Hitler would never do that," argued Batterthwaite. "To the deep student of Hitlerismus the whole episode reeks of improbability and clearly indicates the presence of a spurious substitute." Moreover, he said, we knew that the real Hitler didn't want the Czechs to be incorporated in the Reich, and it was now obvious that the whole business had been taken over by the German Army Command, which wanted everything they could get, because they were not interested in Nazi policy and Aryanism but only in military glory and the domination of Europe.

"In fact," said Batterthwaite, "I am rather sorry for the real Hitler who is dead."

I said that I was more sorry for the stand-in unless he was made of wax like the one at Madame Tussaud's, or the one at Brighton which you see when you've been to the Aquarium and done all the slot-machines and grown tired of fishing for flounders from the people's pier.

But even so, I said, there was no reason for supposing that Hitler was dead. He might have decided to retire from political life and spend the rest of his days in meditation, or collecting butterflies, or bargaining about the film rights of *Mein Kampf*, or writing a sequel to it, while the series of pseudo-Hitlers, made of wax, went on conquering Europe with gramophone records and cyclostyled notes saying "Your capital will be destroyed in forty-eight hours by our glorious airmen unless you sign the enclosed, so there!" And I added that there would be a considerable advantage in the use of wax Hitlers, as compared with living stand-ins, because they couldn't talk or be jealous of each other, even if two of them had been conquering different capitals on the same day.

And then I asked Batterthwaite whether he thought the death or disappearance of the true or proto-Hitler ought to make any difference to our effort to recruit more and more men to resist him.

"Clearly not," said Batterthwaite. "Hitler was only a mascot in any case. He was being used by the German Army to get what they could without fighting before the real struggle begins. When he died——"

"He hasn't died."

"When he died they determined to keep the dummy or deutero-Hitler going as long as he was useful to them. When they don't want him any longer we shall hear about his death, and they will stage a tremendous funeral for him, with mock orations by Dr. Goebbels at an empty tomb."

"And as soon as that happens," I said, "you and people like you will tell me that he is still alive." **EVOE.**



"Yer-s-s-s . . . I thought it might be a bit too strong for you, Mr. Hoskin."



"JAIME LES MILITAIRES"

"Please say I think your soldiers are wonderful—and the more there are of them the better for us all."



"Oh, Mother, we meant to say we'd lost our luggage to April-Fool you, but we have lost our luggage."

The Helping Hand

NOW this, dear, is what I call *really* jolly. Not having you laid up in this tiresome way—no, no, no, don't think I meant that for one moment. I've suffered so much myself one way and another that I always feel *sorry* for anyone who's ill. Always. But there's a very curious streak of the Bohemian in my nature. It's been there from a child. Anything the least little bit out of the ordinary and I'm in my element. (You know we're descended from the Kings of Ireland, which I always think may account for it—one of my ancestors was a McReilly and married a Little mug in the reign of King John, it was always said.)

"So a little scrambled meal taken *al fresco* in a bedroom is just what I enjoy, and the minute I heard you were laid up and no one much in the house to look after you, round I came."

"How kind, Miss Little mug, how kind!"

"Don't say that, dear. What you need is another pillow, but we can easily contrive that by folding up the bedspread and popping it behind you. Now if that's your dressing-gown—"

"But it isn't."

"It looks like a dressing-gown to me, dear."

"It's a coat that has to go to the cleaners."

"Well, dear, if you say so, I dare say it is. But I must say it's very *like* a dressing-gown. One of those old-fashioned ones. And there's your tea, getting cold—*don't* say that's my fault!"

"No, no, it's all right. Miss Little mug! What *is* the matter? Why did you scream like that?"

"Did I scream, dear? I fancy you must have imagined that—I seldom

show my feelings in any way whatever. Reserved to a fault, as my dear father used to say about me. But it *really* distresses me to see that you've ordered tea for me. I never expected such a thing—not for one moment. If I had I certainly shouldn't have come at all. However, as it's there we'd better say no more about it and just see how we can manage. I'll just pop the kettle over here while I settle you comfortably. . . . No, it's all right, dear, really—I don't think the water was actually boiling anyway, and so long as it hasn't spoilt your lovely walnut-wood table it doesn't matter in the very least about my hand. I'm quite used to it; you know how one constantly does that kind of thing in one's own house day after day. What about the brown bread and butter? There's hardly room for it on the tray. Shall we just have it

on top of the wireless? And the honey will be all right, I *think*, if you don't move at all. Now this is really what I call *fun*!"

"Yes, indeed, Miss Littlemug, but it would be even more delightful if you would be so very kind as to put my teacup where I can reach it—especially if I'm not to move because of the honey."

"Dear, your teacup is only just behind the bowl of flowers, and I'm going to put mine on the corner of the dressing-table where I can get at it if I tip my chair backwards. It really is the greatest fun in the world, living like gipsies in a caravan. I always felt that Nature made a mistake about me; I ought to have been a—Dear, would you mind letting me have the cream if you can reach it without moving a finger in *any way*? What was I saying? Yes, I ought to have been a gipsy. I so often hear the call of the wild."

"What does it sound like, Miss Littlemug?"

"Just what you'd expect, dear. Let me pour out another cup of tea for you. Where did we put the teapot, I wonder?"

"Wasn't it on the window-sill?"

"No, that was the cake. There it still is. I put the teapot *within reach*. Of that I'm absolutely certain. The only thing is—*where*?"

"Isn't that it, on the floor at your feet?"

"You don't mean the dog, do you, dear?"

"No, I don't. I mean the teapot. The other side of your chair."

"Now I wonder how I came to forget that I'd put it down there, thinking at the time: 'I must *not* forget where I've put the teapot, whatever I do'? Don't move, dear, unless you want to have the honey all over that nice pink blanket of yours. I can manage to pour out from where I am, I think . . . All right, dear, all right—no harm done. . . . Lucky it went over the book instead of over you, wasn't it? I can mop it all up in no time, if I may just take that towel—I can easily get it without moving. . . . It's only the colour coming off the book, dear. I'm afraid that shows what very inferior dyes they use nowadays, coming off like that in streaks. There now! I always say the little ups and downs of life are what we make them—and where would one be without one's sense of humour? Smile, as I always say, smile, and again—"

"Don't tell me, Miss Littlemug. I've guessed. It's *smile*."

E. M. D.

The Dreamer

UNDOUBTEDLY the situation was oppressively awkward. I stood outside the grilled entrance to the apartment-house in Paris where I was temporarily lodged. It was past two in the morning. Business in the country and a slow train-service had kept me. I rang for the *concierge* to open the door. The *concierge*—the man with the candle, or the gas, or the electric light—pulls a little gadget without leaving his downy pillow, the door swings open, in you walk, close the door and pass to the stairs. You say "*Bon soir*!" to the porter as you pass his small lodgment in the shadows at the end of the corridor.

That is all there is to it—all that happens, or ought to happen. But on this occasion nothing happened. The *concierge* was asleep. A polite *sergent de ville*, who pulled up on the pavement, went so far as to suggest this amazing possibility, but I had already guessed it myself. An auto-driver joined the officer and made a joke about my predicament. He should have known better.

"*Cent vingt six*!" I shouted through the grille.

The *concierge* likes to hear the number of your room. Nothing went on happening. A personage in oilskins joined the rest of the crowd. He also shrewdly opined that the *concierge* might be having a nap. It is perfectly amazing how some gifted individuals can arrive at facts. They are the lucky winners of the crossword prizes.

For my part I felt convinced that the guardian in his box in the shadowy corner was not merely asleep but that he had taken over as a contract job the complete business of the Seven Sleepers, with snores and all dream fixings. How some people can sleep! No worry about insomnia in their offices!

The *sergent de ville* shook his head gravely and walked away into the night—or morning—reproach for late hours in every solemn tread. I rang once more and told the *concierge* that my number was 126.

And then a light twinkled. I had won. The door clicked and there was my *concierge*. He was standing there holding a big tin candlestick, and he was yawning and apologising—thousands of apologies, for, as he explained to me, thinking doubtless I would not know, he had been asleep.

"I was dreaming, monsieur—a dream such as one seldom has—a dream I did not dare to leave!"

All that, after the united efforts of one *sergent de ville*, one auto gentleman and a fellow in oilskins to rouse him!

"Monsieur must hear of my dream!"

He stood there, blinking like an owl, his droll black velvet cap on the side of his head.

A clock struck three.

Three o'clock in the morning—waiting the whole night through! Was that a time for dreams?

Perhaps all times are good for the right dreams, or for doing something another asks, though it may be to your own despatch.

I followed the guardian into his little hutch. He did somehow seem to resemble a rather comfortable rabbit as he stooped down and made me a cup of coffee. A very kindly gentle old *concierge* he was. He talked like a man who has not as yet quite returned from roving in dreamland. There were threads, silver and gold, left hanging in what he said.

"You see, monsieur," he said, "Spain is on my mother's side."

Very nice for Spain and his mother, of course.

Yet one forgot all else as he talked, for all he said was so real, so earnest, so full of dignity and the spirit of the spring, of that magic time of Easter and the message of good cheer, the golden tidings carried by unseen couriers, glorious as the sunrise, soaring upwards to the stars.

Peace was coming to the world at Easter!

That's what he had dreamed—peace because of *that*, because of a surpassing vision, impelling, majestic, instinct with tender meaning, of kindness infinite and understanding which encompassed all.

"They were riding in, monsieur," said the old *concierge*, his voice trembling—"riding in on white horses, and one hardly dared to look. They passed through my little village in Andalous, for my mother was from Spain. They swept on, and there was music which touched the heart, and everywhere these messengers spread the great news that peace had come back to the world—peace, with many dreams and all of us as brothers trying to see fair, to serve the cause. You will pardon it, monsieur, that I did not wake, for the dream was so close to me and Easter is very near."

Unfortunately . . .

"How do we stand in the air compared with Germany?"—*Daily Mail*.

On the step that isn't there, probably.

At the Pictures

SEEING AND NOT BELIEVING

OF course I have seen too many films (haven't we all?), but I never managed to see *Topper*, and I regret that. A scene or two from it is repeated at the beginning of the sequel, *Topper Takes a Trip* (Director: NORMAN Z. MACLEOD), for explanatory purposes: we see how *George* and *Marion Kerby*, having got killed in a car-smash, hang about the world able to appear and disappear at will until they have done a good deed. *George* is now settled, presumably in Elysium, but *Marion* (CONSTANCE BENNETT) has to take a lot of trouble to clear up the tangled affairs of *Topper* (ROLAND YOUNG), and not until she has restored him to his wife can she join her husband.

There are technical miracles in the picture; it includes many charmingly strange moments besides the constant fading-in and -out of *Marion* and her dog (which causes concern at one point by only *half* appearing). A cocktail-glass tilts and empties itself into thin—or perhaps it would be better to say thick—air; a cigarette hangs from nothing, smoking itself; a key on a ring sails along unlocking all the cells in a French jail; a pencil, apparently unassisted, writes a letter. In a film that depends very largely on such continual marvels one doesn't expect outstandingly good playing, but Mr. YOUNG and Miss BENNETT are excellent in their—admittedly not exacting—parts. BILLIE BURKE has quantities of (at a generous estimate) half-witted things to say as *Topper's* wife, and the dialogue generally is amusing. This picture, though “unimportant,” is thoroughly enjoyable and often very funny.

The fact that *The Gang's All Here* (Director: THORNTON FREELAND) gives an impression of prodigious waste can be put down almost entirely, I think, to the script. This is by no means all that is wrong with the picture (many of the sets look as if they were made of cardboard, and at least one of the street-scenes seems to have been deliberately lit in such a

way as to make the cardboard obvious; indeed the lighting throughout is, to say the least, eccentric), but it's enough. JACK BUCHANAN is there and he doesn't dance or sing; OTTO

pretend to be what the English think American gangsters are like; SYD WALKER is there simply to say a few things and give “Band Waggon” fans the delight of recognising his voice;

ROBB WILTON is there to stand behind a bar and a handlebar moustache for about two minutes; GOOGIE WITHERS and EDWARD EVERETT HORTON are there . . . Oh, what's the use? The show is like a musical-comedy without the music: anything that might get a laugh, anything that might impress seem to have been thrown in as soon as they were thought of—and to hell with Art and even credibility.

But in the middle of a story that doesn't hesitate to employ the most absurd farcical conventions we have the well-known scene between the two ballistics experts, one of whom says to the other, “Now we will compare *this* bullet with the one that killed him”—as it might be one keen-looking literary critic explaining to another the precise way in which he is able to detect a split infinitive.

I simply cannot fathom the reason for the extraordinary naivety, amateurishness and lack of attention to detail that characterise most British films involving crime. Mr. HITCHCOCK's seem to be almost our only adult ones . . . This, in my opinion, is a very second-rate effort, though it has funny moments.

More doctors. LEW AYRES, who has recently shown how good he can be in small parts with any life in them, gets a large part without much life in it in *Young Dr. Kildare* (Director: HAROLD S. BUCQUET) and does his best. This, it appears, is the first of a series about young *Dr. Kildare* and old *Dr. Gillespie* (LIONEL BARRYMORE); and if all the others in the series follow the lines of this the detail of medical life is to be used merely as a background to a lot of mystery stories, with *Dr. Kildare's* activities described as diagnosis rather than detection. All right; but don't be fooled, in this instance, by talk of “another *Citadel*.”

Young *Dr. Kildare's* father is a country doctor; and old *Dr. Abbott* (EDWARD ELLIS) in *A Man to Remember* (Director: GARSON KANIN) also has a son who at first wants to do more than be an “unsuccessful” general



Topper. “AS I SHALL FIND DIFFICULTY IN PAYING THIS HOTEL BILL, COULD YOU AT MEAL-TIMES POSSIBLY DEMATERIALISE?”

Topper ROLAND YOUNG
Marion CONSTANCE BENNETT

KRUGER, JACK LA RUE and DAVID BURNS are there and they have to



J.H.D.

Fan. “A FEW MORE OF THESE DOCTORS AND I SHALL NEED A REAL ONE.”

John Abbott . . . EDWARD ELLIS



practitioner like his father. By the end of this film the son has changed his views (I foresee a similar ending to the *Kildare* series, if it ever does end), and the reasons for this are very well conveyed indeed. *A Man to Remember*, nominally a "B" or minor work, is a genuinely good film, well acted by a cast without a single big name in it and admirably directed by a newcomer who is certainly on the way to fame. Absorbing, credible, sometimes extremely moving, and worth taking a good deal of trouble to see.

The "major" work in the same programme was *St. Louis Blues* (Director: RAOUL WALSH), a lot of fuss about nothing. It has some good comic and musical moments, but most of the latter seem to be interrupted. I'm glad to have heard MAXINE SULLIVAN though. R. M.

"LOCAL HOGS DECLINE TWENTY-FIVE CENTS."—Market report in *Toronto Paper*.
How much do they want?—the swine.

Initials

SO many troubles has John Bull,
Such numerous officials,
He cannot name them all in full
But has to use initials;
Old poets sang of English soil
And how we kept it free,
But now our tongues refuse the toil,
We call it A.R.P.

*But praises be
To H.M.G.
Applaud the P.C. too!
And shout "Hooray!"
H.M. the K.!*
Likewise H.M. the Q.!"

The President of the B.O.T.
Has sent a commissar
To do a deal for H.M.G.
With dear U.S.S.R.
In "Buckhouse" now resides the Court,
And Scapa's going strong;
But if our time is quite so short,
Why not have names less long?

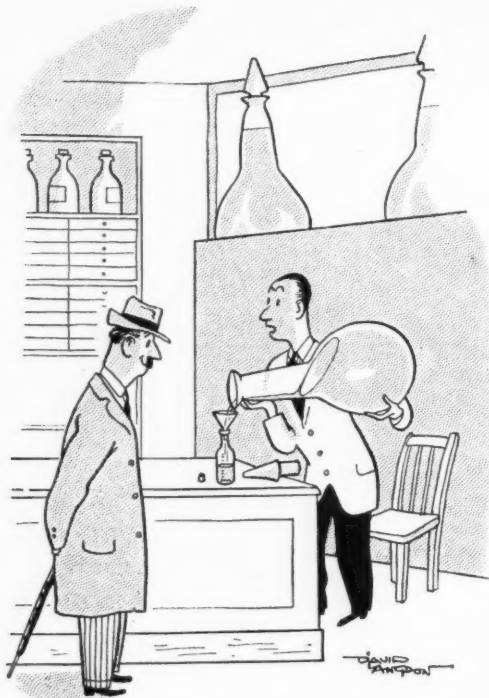
*Oh, H.M. Gov.
We dearly love:
And H.M. Cab. as well.
Sing, three times three,
The H. of C.
Likewise the H. of L.!*

Our wordy ancestors no doubt
Had much more time to waste;
So they could spell things slowly out;
We moderns have to haste.
But, though I see the point of view,
The piece of news I crave
Is "What exactly do we do
With all the time we save?"

*Yet praises be
To H.M.G.
Applaud the P.C. too!
And shout "Hooray!"
H.M. the K.!*
Likewise H.M. the Q.!"
A. P. H.



"There's a new situation in Europe, Emmie."



"You can have a bottleful with pleasure, Sir, but I honestly doubt whether it will do you any good."

Assistant Masters: Are They Insane?

(A continuation of Mr. A. J. Wentworth's account of Foundation Day at Burgrove Preparatory School)

THE Old Boys beat the School 4-2 this afternoon. An excellent game, though I confess my attention was rather distracted at times. Several parents came up to discuss their sons' progress, and in particular I had a long talk with Mrs. Hillman. She is petite with blue eyes and is rather charming though a little unorthodox. We talked about the ballet for a while, of which I know nothing, and then she suddenly turned to me and remarked, "What a funny old stick your headmaster is!" I was naturally taken aback, especially as other parents and their boys were standing quite close to us, and I hurriedly observed that I hoped she would be at the concert in the evening. But she refused to take the hint.

"Come now, Mr. Wentworth," she said, laying her small hand on my arm, "you can't deny it. Look at him talking to that woman in the wig over there."

"Really, Mrs. Hillman!" I said in a low voice. "We are not alone."

"That isn't my fault, is it, Mr. Wentworth?" she replied. I was absolutely dumbfounded, and before I could collect my wits she went on in the most confiding way, "Is he or is he not a pompous old thing?"

"Well—" I began, and we both laughed.

We soon became firm friends and she talked in a most interesting way about several of the parents, many of

whom she seemed to know personally. I pointed out Clarke's mother, a very striking figure in red, and she remarked, "It costs that woman eight hundred a year to look like that."

"No one would say that of you, Mrs. Hillman," I said gallantly.

"Meaning that I'm obviously cheaply turned-out?" she replied mischievously.

I simply gave her a look and she lowered her eyes.

"Here comes that spiteful old cat with the wig," she said presently. "Now watch. Hullo, Peggy. You know Mr. Wentworth, don't you? Mr. Wentworth—Lady Cleethorpes."

"How do you do," I said.

"We were just talking about you," said Mrs. Hillman. "Mr. Wentworth was saying you looked a spiteful old cat."

"I assure you, Lady Cleethorpes!" I cried, reddening to the roots of my hair. "Mrs. Hillman is utterly—"

"Did she tell you I wear a wig?"

"I—that is," I began, completely at a loss for words, "I should never have guessed—"

"Well, I don't," said Lady Cleethorpes, and both women went off into peals of laughter.

I felt extremely uncomfortable. People were looking at us—and no wonder. The football field, when a serious game is in progress, is not the place for loud laughter. Besides, the whole position was most embarrassing. There seemed to be no knowing what these extraordinary ladies would say next. I determined to bring the conversation back to a sensible level at once.

"How is your husband, Mrs. Hillman?" I asked, giving her a reproachful look.

She became serious at once. "I have no husband—now, Mr. Wentworth," she said.

I murmured a few conventional words of sympathy, cursing myself silently for a clumsy fool, but she cut me short.

"I divorced him," she said briskly. "He was no loss."

"So go in and win, Mr. Wentworth," added Lady Cleethorpes with another of her penetrating laughs.

I may be old-fashioned but I confess I have no use whatever for this kind of talk. Divorce is not a subject for jesting. No doubt, in the world in which some people live, the so-called *haut monde*, it is considered clever and amusing to make light of serious and intimate subjects of this kind, but here at Burgrove we prefer to take a different attitude. Moreover I do not care to be made the object of remarks in, to say the least, doubtful taste, particularly when these involve the good name of a lady who happens to be present.

I made my excuses rather coldly and turned away, not knowing that one of my sock-suspenders had unluckily come unfastened and was trailing on the ground. I might not have noticed had not Mrs. Hillman unwittingly set her foot on the metal clasp or fastener so that I was brought up short after a single stride and all but overbalanced. Mrs. Hillman very kindly moved her foot in a quite natural way when she noticed my predicament, as if unaware that anything unusual had happened, but Lady Cleethorpes, who seems to be utterly lacking in tact, broke out into another loud laugh and cried, "You'll have to marry her now." This was too much for my temper and I fear I might have spoken very sharply to Lady Cleethorpes had not the Headmaster come up at that moment and joined the group.

"Ah!" he said, rubbing his hands together in a way which I am bound to say I sometimes find rather irritating. "I hope Mr. Wentworth has been entertaining you two ladies."

"He certainly has," said Lady Cleethorpes.



"Yes, I know, but I couldn't find the toasting-fork anywhere."

tall good-looking boy in spectacles. She used to be a Mrs. Mason before her second marriage, you know."

"Mason?" I cried.

"Yes. Johnny Mason. You must know him."

"Ah!" I said. "Yes. Yes, yes. Mason. I see."

H. F. E.

Ballade of Comfortable Prediction

WHEN all the air is darkened and the gale
Sweeps demon-winged across the nations' sky,
Let others don their coats of gleaming mail
Or teach the airy barrage how to fly:
Though owls may scream, and evening papers cry
Of mighty legions mustering by the score,
Their dire prognostications I defy.
My grocer thinks there will not be a war.

'Tis sweet to listen to his soothing tale
And hear the tempest passing safely by,
What time he metes with grave deliberate scale
My butter and the future of Shanghai,
And tells me of Miss Martin and his eye
And Madame Tabouis and the open door—
Though never have I grasped precisely why
My grocer thinks there will not be a war.

Last night methought I crossed the Stygian trail
(With aching temples and a shattered thigh)
And asked the boatman why his cheek was pale
Or what distress could fetch so deep a sigh.
"The shades are restive," Charon made reply;
"Some Austrian chap whom none had known before
Has pinched Elysium. But we don't say die:
My grocer things there will not be a war."

Envoi

Prince, never tell me that you still rely
On the crude views of Johnson's Household Store.
The man knows less than you or even I—
My grocer thinks there will not be a war.



"It's not a bit of use asking me, my dear man;
I can't see a thing."

I left them as soon as I could and wandered off to the far side of the field, where I did my best to forget my annoyance by concentrating on the game. The Old Boys had just scored their third goal through Felpman (a mainstay of the Eleven in the old days, though a poor mathematician. Percentages always used to beat him, I remember) and things looked bad for Burgrove. Then Clarke made a good run and I joined in the general shouts of "Play up, School!" Nothing came of it, however. The Old Boys returned to the attack with renewed vigour, Felpman again beating his man and sending out a neat pass to Sidgwick. "Offside!" I cried, forgetting myself in the excitement of the moment. (Criticism of the referee is very rightly forbidden here.) But Sidgwick centred over the crossbar and the School goalkeeper punted well up the field from the Behind.

"Oh, Mr. Wentworth," said a well-known voice, and I turned to find Mrs. Hillman at my side. "I am so sorry," she said, "if Peggy annoyed you."

"It was nothing," I said stiffly. "Lady Cleethorpes has perhaps a rather—unusual sense of humour."

"You're not angry with me, are you?"

I looked down at her kindly, and found to my intense mortification that I was still holding the loose suspender in my right hand. Mrs. Hillman followed the direction of my eyes and then, with a discretion which I admired, turned her head away. I stuffed the offending article into my pocket.

"Tell me, Mrs. Hillman," I said, to cover our mutual embarrassment; "your friend—Lady Cleethorpes—she has no boy here surely? There is no Cleethorpes on the School List. A nephew perhaps?"

"Oh, didn't you know?" she replied, opening her eyes wide in astonishment. "That's her son over there—that



Blue Print

(No. 1)

(With which is incorporated "Snooze Letter" and "The Bilious Weekly.")

(Subscription Rates—6d. each Number, or 5/- for ten.)

Motto:

"EVERY SILVER LINING HAS A CLOUD IN FRONT OF IT."

THERE are not enough gloomy broadsheets; those we have are not gloomy enough; and they are not gloomy about enough subjects. The growth of the broadsheet, snooze-letter and secret post-card is a

remarkable sign of the times. It is a smack in the face for the effete and pusillanimous capitalist Press. Every day that Captain Hook-Smith's *Wide-shot* or Dale Donovan's *Grey Matter* creeps out into the suburbs the circulations of the "popular" organs go down with a bump. The small sheet prints fearlessly the news which the big shot of Fleet Street drops with a shiver into the waste-paper-basket. Indeed Mike Mole has called his little message *W.P.B.*

Sometimes (to be fair to the big papers) they do not print the *real* news simply because they do not *get* it. The fact is that they are *too* big—too big to get through the key-holes and creep under the tables, where the small fellow can go with ease and assurance. Moreover, persons in authority are

often afraid of the professional newspaperman, who says frankly that he wants to get the news in order to print it. The shy little chap who does not let on that he is compiling a secret post-card in his bedroom every week is admitted to all sorts of private scenes and conversations from which the other would be shooed away.

When the history of these bijou bombshells comes to be written tales of stark heroism will surprise the world. The first two numbers of *W.P.B.* were done on a typewriter in a locked bathroom. The total issue was ten—two top copies and eight carbons. Some of these had to be sent to the British Museum, the Bodleian, and the other statutory libraries; and two of the remainder were tidied away by a charwoman. But the copies which did get abroad had their effect. It will be remembered that that same week-end there was a *démarche* in Paris, a *détente* in Rome, a *panache* in Budapest and a *risotto* in Soho; and on the Monday came the amazing *volte-face* of the British Government.

Authority, to do it justice, has been quick to realize that the semi-private broadsheet has an influence not to be measured by its size or its circulation. All the bedroom editors are closely watched. Threats, veiled or open, are part of their daily lives. The Foreign Office of course would not be so foolish as to act openly; but it is well understood who is behind those mysterious telephone-calls.

Nor is the British Government unique in such attentions. The eyes and ears of the Wilhelmstrasse, the Quai d'Orsay, the Sjabskvo Palace, the Casa Rioja, the Pons Asinorum and the "Anglers' Arms" are at the doors of the humble editors of *Wide-shot*, *Grey Matter*, *W.P.B.* and *Hanky-Panky*. (The last-named, as many readers know, is actually printed on a single handkerchief and passed from hand to hand at matinées.) Indeed such is the press of foreign agents about the modest dwelling of Ed. Snoot (editor, publisher, writer and proprietor of *Post-Card*) that he has been compelled on more than one occasion to apply for police protection. *The reason why the request has been invariably refused will be guessed without difficulty by the well-informed.*

Still, as has been said, there are not enough of these soul-stirrers and thought-provokers; and therefore *we* appear. What, after all, is their total circulation?

<i>W.P.B.</i>	73
<i>Wide-shot</i>	49
<i>Post-Card</i>	10

<i>Hanky-Panky</i> ..	1
<i>Brass Tacks</i> ..	4
<i>The Low-Down</i> ..	190
<i>The Show-Up</i> ..	9
<i>The Know-All</i> ..	99
<i>Plumber</i> ..	11
<i>Secrets</i> ..	39
<i>Grey Matter</i> ..	37
<i>Tell-Tale</i> ..	12
<i>Key-Holes</i> ..	45

Why do they not sell more? The explanation is obvious. They concentrate on being gloomy and well-informed about Foreign Affairs. But anyone can be gloomy about Foreign Affairs—indeed nothing is easier. And almost anyone can seem to be well-informed about Foreign Affairs. All that is necessary is to say: "If X had not been done in 19— Y would not be happening now. Moreover, if A is not done now B will happen very soon." Since the ifs are always big ones, nobody using this technique can ever be proved to be wrong.

And anyhow the whole world is so sick of Foreign Affairs that few people still wish to have good information about it, however gloomy it is. What is wanted is a new, honest, courageous little narrowsheet *which shall be well-informed and gloomy about EVERYTHING*.

So here we are!

We shall take you deep down into the recesses of *everything*, behind the curtains of *everybody*. We shall not be content to reveal the cancerous growths which are eating away the blossoms of truth and honesty in the Chancelleries of Europe. *We shall show you the sinks of cricket! We shall take you behind the scenes at the British Museum! We shall expose the dregs of the National Gallery! We shall unmask the Rotarians, denounce the Charity racket, debunk the Spring!*

There shall be gloom concerning all things.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS.

Notes of the Week

THE SPRING

The flowering of the crocus in the London Parks has produced among the unthinking the usual crop of optimistic forecasts. The daffodil will follow, say these innocent wish-fulfillers, with the bluebell not far behind. Cherry-trees will blossom, larks sing, and by May the smug procession of events which we call the English Spring will be well advanced. And all this, so the argument goes, will give a much-needed fillip to the waning prestige of the British Government. Those in the know, however, and particularly

those who ever since Stresa have been predicting Munich, are bound to discount such comfortable predictions. Herr Hitler, as all know well save those who wilfully close their minds to knowledge, does not confine his dreams of dominion to the land. *He is after the Gulf Stream.*

The plan is simple, and was exhaustively discussed at a secret luncheon of Nazi leaders in the Himmelhof at which we happened to be present. Herr Hitler at heart is humane to the point of sentimentality; and though he may threaten to bomb this capital and that, nothing would induce him to give such an order. The democratic Premiers, therefore, have only to answer "Bomb and be blown!" and the whole house of cards would fall to the ground. So far, however, no Prime Minister has yet been found to make that reply; and it is assumed that the same technique will continue to triumph. The United States will be presented with the simple choice—"Hand over the Panama Canal or I bomb New York." It was not assumed at the Himmelhof that there would be any doubt about the reply; Herr Hitler angrily rebuked an adviser who suggested such a possibility, but from our position under the table we were unable to identify the speaker.

With the Panama Canal in his hands the Fuehrer's course is simple. *He opens all the locks and lets the Gulf Stream run out into the Pacific.* Thus, without a bomb dropped, Britain is brought to her knees. Bereft of the warming waters, she retains her capital

but loses her climate, and dwindles rapidly to the status of Spitzbergen. Meanwhile across the Pacific the road to Australia is open.

(Next week: THE TRUTH ABOUT CRICKET.)

(Printed on blotting-paper by the Haddock Press in a small wine-cellar off Wapping High Street.)

A. P. H.

Household Hints

ALL housewives know that in the Spring Pests fly around like anything; But knowing where the flu will spread, I sprinkle asp'rin 'neath my bed.

And in my kettle new and bright I take no chance on moth or blight; But knowing where the fur will settle, I crumble moth-balls in my kettle.

The Old "Safety-First"

"Over the badge appears the Imperial Crown, and beneath it is the gallant motto of the regiment, 'Es Fidelis' (Be Careful)."

New Zealand Paper.

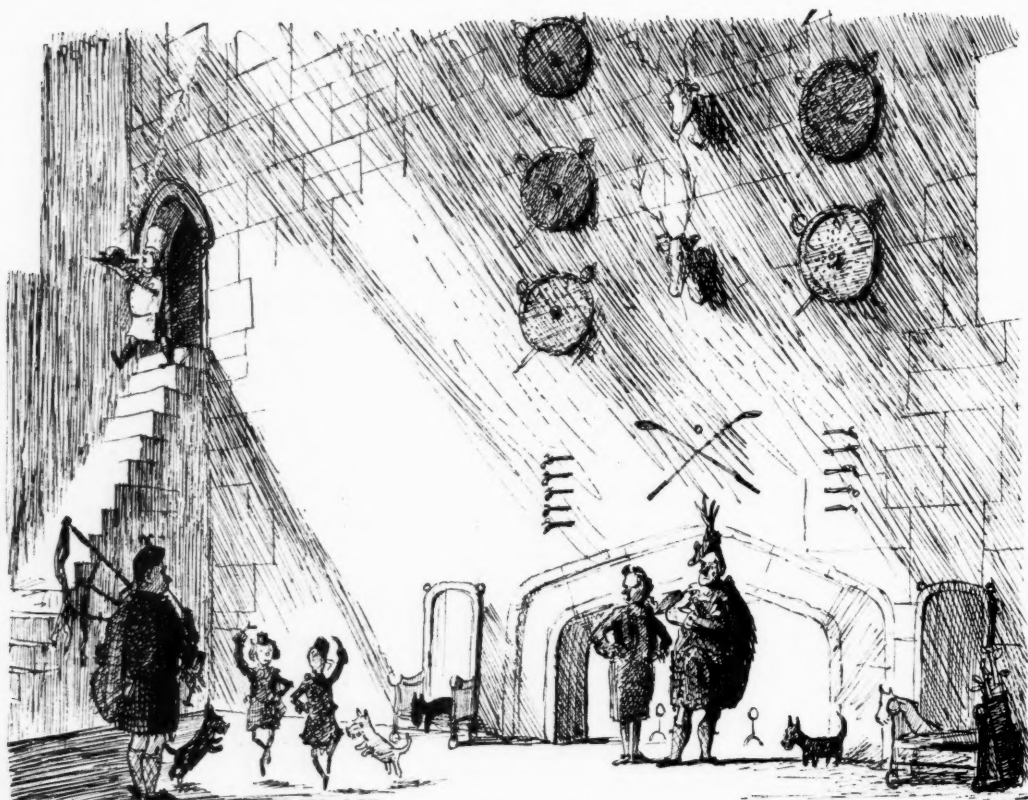
"Her work for the night done, she turned and cautiously began to return to her base. Below, stoker —, stripped to the waist, fed her roaring engines, as the submarine dipped once more to the bed of the ocean to avoid the wire and net emplacements."

Sussex Paper.

Down, down she went, smoke belching from her red-hot funnels. . . .



"I'm sorry, Madam, but she insists on five guineas."



POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS—LIFE IN SCOTLAND

Windy Night

THE wind runs howling
O'er hollow and hill,
The wind stands growling
At my window-sill,
The wind comes sweeping
Like a swan in flight—
Oh, I do love sleeping
On a windy night!

The tall trees battle
And their branches clash,
The door-knobs rattle
And the window-sash,
There's a banshee crying
In the chimney-head—
And here I'm lying
In my nice warm bed

And make-believing
I'm on board a ship,
Heaving, heaving

'Neath the hurricane's whip,
Her bulkheads groaning
To her lift-and-fall,
And her siren droning
On top of it all;

Or I'm skyward swooping
In a fighter plane,
Banking, looping,
Banking again,
The cold air racing
In a blast of hail
And black clouds chasing
Our tossed-up tail;

Or night has brought us
To the Alpine hut,
The storm has caught us
And the pass is shut,
The avalanche bellows
From his dreadful den

And we're stuck, poor fellows,
Till the Lord knows when.

(Strictly speaking
And *entre nous*
Such suicide-seeking
Would scare me blue,
But it's grand to swank it
When the storm-gods shout
And you've sheet and blanket
To keep them out.)

O magic-maker
In the big black sky,
Take Earth and shake her
Till dawn, say I;
For my pillow's roundest
And my sheets most soft
And I sleep my soundest
When the wind's aloft!

H. B.



AN OLD STORY RETOLD

Herr Hitler. "It's all right; you know the proverb—'Barking dogs don't bite'?"

Signor Mussolini. "Oh, yes, *I* know it, and *you* know it; but does the dog know it?"

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Impressions of Parliament

Synopsis of the Week

Monday, March 27th.—Lords: Czecho-Slovakia (Restrictions on Banking Accounts) Bill passed. China Currency Stabilisation Bill given Second Reading.

Commons: Cotton Industry (Re-organisation) Bill given Second Reading.

Tuesday, March 28th.—Lords: Debate on Foreign Policy.

Commons: Announcement of New Subsidies for Shipping. Debate on Unemployment.

Wednesday, March 29th.—Lords: Debate on Unemployment.

Commons: Announcement that Territorial Army is to be doubled. Camps Bill given Second Reading.

Monday, March 27th.—The Government's Bill authorising British banks to hold up Czecho-Slovakian assets in this country against various financial obligations of Prague which the German invasion had put in doubt met with no opposition in the Lords and was rushed through its stages; but Lord STRABOLGI seized the opportunity to advocate an economic boycott of Germany.

In the Commons, however, Mr. BUTLER told Sir ALFRED KNOX that the possibility of such an encirclement had not been considered.

Although the P.M. held that it was too soon to estimate the extent

to which Germany had gained control of the Rumanian oil-fields, he was able to give the House a reassuring report on the general independence of Rumania. He understood that the trade agreement recently signed with

to prevent aggression, and though no one questioned Lord DAVIES' assertion that it was time we regained our old position, Lord HASTINGS considered his demand that we should undertake wide obligations in Central Europe and set up new machinery for the settlement of international disputes to be out of touch with reality.

Pressed by a determined Opposition, Mr. CHAMBERLAIN was reticent about the astonishingly optimistic statements given by the Government to the Press as lately as March 9th. On whose nose the pink spectacles had sat was more than he would say. After Major OWEN had fought a long and entertaining skirmish with the Assistant P.M.G. about the need for putting up instructions in Welsh as well as English in telephone kiosks in rural Wales, Sir WALTER WOMERSLEY's objection being that instructions in Welsh took up more space than was contained in any kiosk (even "Dial 999" would go two or three times round the walls, so Mr. P's. R. understands), Mr. STANLEY pleased the House with his announcement of a new scheme of subsidies and loans for shipping. This included assistance for tramps and liners, and a fund with which old ships can be bought up for reserve.

On the subject of foreign affairs Mr. CHAMBERLAIN was unable for the moment to be explicit, but he admitted that what the Government had in mind went a great deal further than consultation.

The Opposition were only mildly critical of Mr. ERNEST BROWN's Bill to adjust the various Insurance Acts to the problems raised by holidays with pay, and the House gave it a



THE APOTHECARY

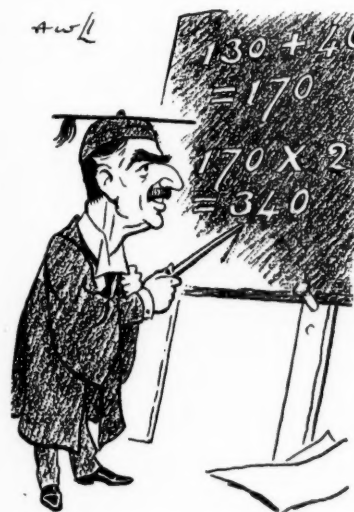
MR. OLIVER STANLEY DOES SOME DISPENSING.

Germany contained no political clause, and he added that the Rumanian Foreign Minister had informed him that his country proposed to retain and develop its economic ties with other states and were anxious to welcome the British trade mission which was shortly to leave for Bucharest.

Next year, the centenary of the British postage-stamp, is to be a beano for philatelists. The kindly P.M.G. intends printing four special issues to brighten their albums. To add extra zest to the occasion he may also be planning to print a few upside-down and backwards in the wrong colours, for nothing so gladdens the philatelic heart as a grand slam of official error, but naturally he is keeping this a birthday secret.

Mr. OLIVER STANLEY easily got a Second Reading for the Bill by which it is hoped the cotton industry will be able to pull itself together. The Bill's main essentials have been devised within the industry; briefly its aims are to cut out surplus production and to fix prices.

Tuesday, March 28th.—The debate in the Lords was not very productive, because Lord PLYMOUTH was unable to say how far the Government had gone in consultation with other Powers

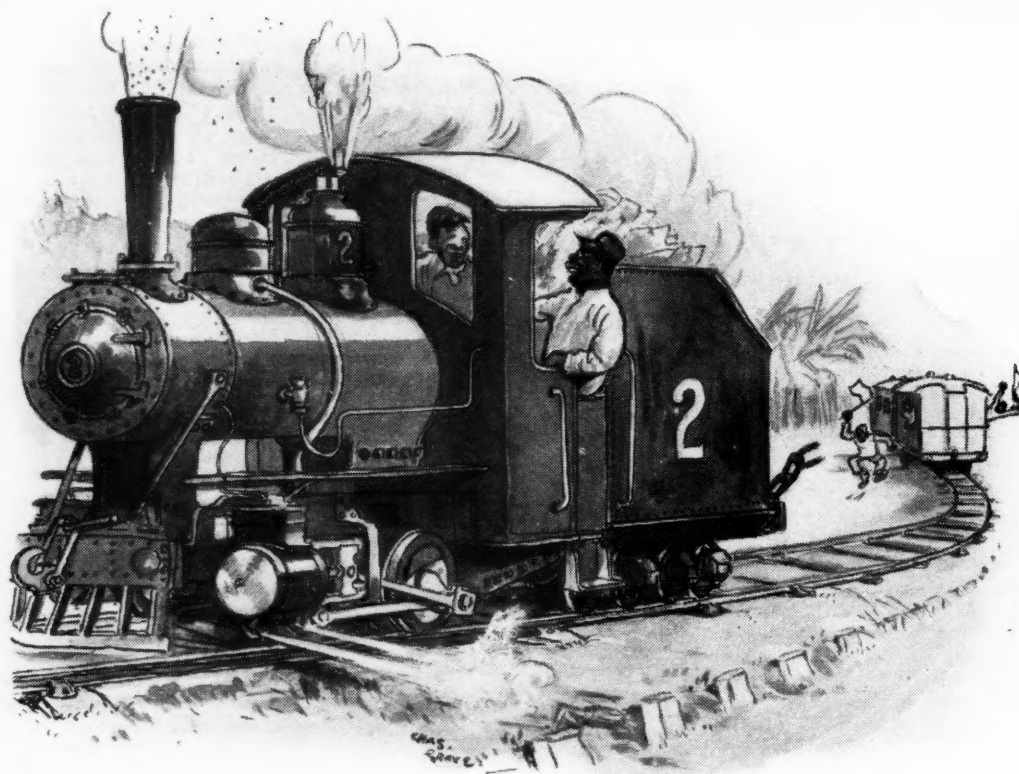


HIGHER MATHEMATICS FOR THE (TERRITORIAL) ARMY CLASS

THE PRIME MINISTER DOES A LITTLE SUM IN THOUSANDS.



"Hon. Members know that there have been great advances in the technique of hairdressing."—Sir ROBERT TASKER, moving his Hairdressers (Registration) Bill.



"De old gal's takin' de bill well dis mawnin', Jake."

Second Reading. The chief excitement of the evening was the resolution tabled by thirty-four Government supporters, including Mr. EDEN, Mr. CHURCHILL, Mr. DUFF COOPER and Mr. AMERY, asking for the vigorous prosecution of the FOREIGN SECRETARY'S policy and for the formation of a National Government on the widest possible basis. It was considered curious that no Member from the parties which would thus be called in had signed the resolution.

Wednesday, March 29th.—A frank speech by the PRIMATE, in which he declared that we were only tinkering with the problem in a series of quite unrelated experiments, marked the Lords' debate on unemployment. He asked for more serious consideration of the location of industry, for adjustment between unemployment assistance and old-age pensions, and for a committee of officials, industrialists and trade union representatives to go into the whole business.

At Questions, Mr. CHAMBERLAIN drew rousing cheers with his announce-

ment that the Territorial Army, now on a peace establishment of 130,000, is to be raised immediately to war establishment by the addition of 40,000 men, and that the entire Territorial Force will then be doubled



OUR BACK BENCH WHO'S WHO

The ripe asides of Mr. BATEY
Make parliamentary life more matey.

so as to stand at 340,000. In reply to Mr. GREENWOOD, Mr. CHAMBERLAIN said he hoped that this action would demonstrate that voluntary service would meet all our needs. An intensive recruiting campaign would probably be necessary, and it was hoped that employers would do their bit by liberal treatment of T.A. employees.

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN, sitting in Mr. SPEAKER'S Gallery, then heard Mr. A. P. HERBERT return, under the ten minutes rule, to the attack on those who, by their "inertia, ignorance and indifference," were thwarting his ambition of a Thames treated once more as one of London's main thoroughfares and not merely as a back-alley for the delivery of goods; and, later, Mr. ELLIOT explaining the Government's Camps Bill, for which he had general support.

In the evening an amendment to last night's resolution was handed in by no fewer than 177 Government supporters, declaring complete confidence in the P.M. and deprecating attempts to undermine confidence.

The Minority was Right

MANY a celebrity might have achieved greatness in another sphere. Bunny Austin might have been a Bradman and I—well, judge for yourself.

I started by writing thrillers; to be exact, a thriller. You may remember it. It was published as a serial in *The Quinquennial Review* and began with the adventures of a gang of pirates which swept the Spanish Main.

As, however, there were seventy-two instalments and Time marches on, I met with many difficulties. These I overcame with characteristic skill. To keep my story topical the gang became in turn highwaymen, Chartists, Militant Suffragists, Al. Caponists and income-tax collectors.

It was the last instalment but one that put paid to my career as a Horler. This in itself is significant; it is usually the last instalment that settles an account.

I had worked my readers up into a state verging on hysteria. Thousands had written to *The Quinquennial Review* for back numbers and had been referred to the British Museum, and more than one of my admirers who coveted the original manuscript was prosecuted by the L.C.C. for tres-

passing on their refuse-dumps. The stage was set for the capture of the villain-in-chief.

He and his gang had planned to burgle the hero's flat and the latter had set a trap for them. They spent hours cutting through a massive safe only to find it empty. The family heirlooms were in a hat-box under his bed all the time and escaped discovery.

Following the appearance of this particular instalment in 1923 there was a spate of correspondence addressed to the Editor, some of which was published in the next issue. I reproduce below a representative letter:—

1928.

DEAR SIR,—In my opinion Mr. Bunkwood's story is ridiculous. No one would be fool enough to hide his valuables in a hat-box under his bed.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) W. SIKES.

Five years later I shattered criticism with the following reply:—

109, Angel Court, E.1.

DEAR SIR,—Your correspondent, W. Sikes, is impertinent. In support of my story, let me say that I

always keep my valuables in a hat-box under the bed.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) ANDREW BUNKWOOD.

I have abandoned thrillers since for many reasons. The letter I received from the Editor of *The Quinquennial Review* early in 1938 accounts for forty-eight thousand three hundred and ninety-three of them:—

DEAR SIR,—I am sending you per our van forty-eight thousand three hundred and ninety-three letters we have received in reply to yours published in 1933. As you will see, the gist of them is this:—

"There is no jewellery in Mr. Bunkwood's hat-box under his bed."

One letter we are retaining and will publish in the next issue.

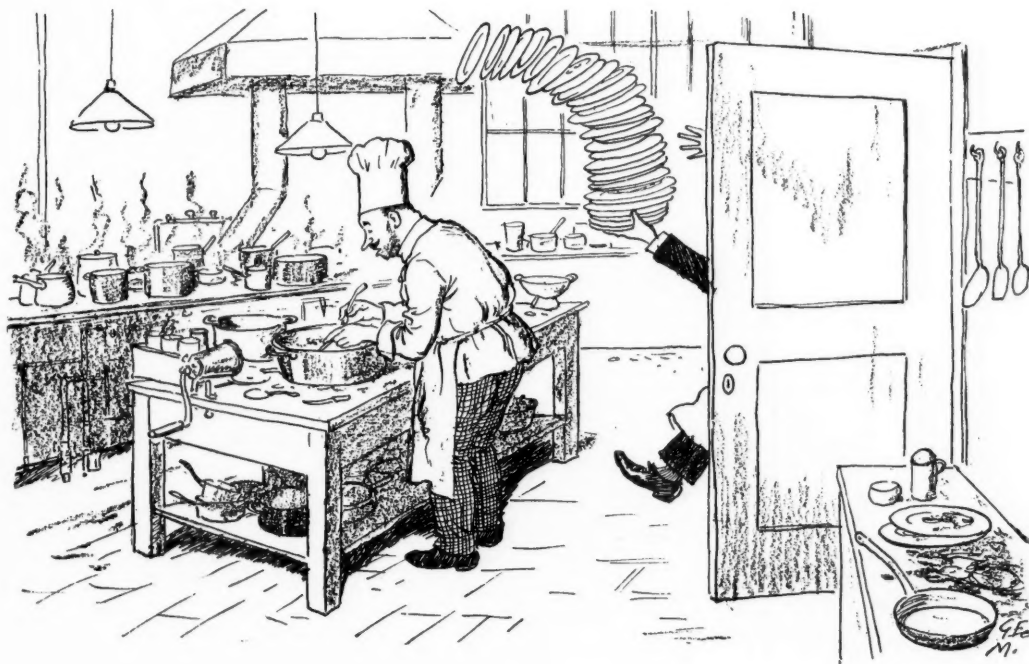
Yours faithfully,
EDITOR.

The letter duly appeared and is quoted below:—

1933.

DEAR SIR,—I beg Mr. Bunkwood's pardon. He is a bigger fool than I thought. His jewellery was in a hat-box under the bed.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) W. SIKES.



"... and bring some more plates, Maurice."

At the Play

"THE MAN IN HALF MOON STREET" (NEW)

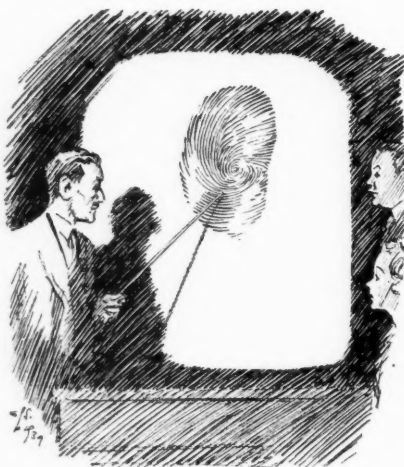
I CANNOT remember ever having been asked before by a playwright to accept as likeable and upright a man who has committed eight deliberate and cold-blooded murders. It is a very tall order; but Mr. BARRÉ LYNDON confuses the issue so astutely and Mr. LESLIE BANKS plays this master of assassination so discreetly that one's moral sense is quickly lulled into a convenient coma in which it is soon joined by one's sense of probability.

The theme is an ingenious treatment of rejuvenation. To look at *John Thackeray* you would say he was a fit Englishman of about forty. If anyone suggested to you that he was a German chemist of ninety, hardened in the habit of dissolving bank-cashiers in tanks of acid, you would laugh. This is what the police do at first when they find that *Thackeray's* finger-print corresponds with that of the author of eight classic murders, for they tell each other that it is against nature for a young resident of Half Moon Street to have pulled a bath-plug on a liquidated clerk in Breslau in the last century.

They are wrong. In the early days in Breslau *Thackeray* had discovered that it was possible surgically for two people of the same blood-group to swap supra-renal glands, and by experiment on himself he had found that provided he took frequent swigs of radium water the operation preserved him for some years from the effects of age. Obviously a better scientist than philosopher, he had decided that his duty to his fellows lay in perfecting this method of indefinitely prolonging their lives. His main obstacle had been lack of money, for each renewal was costly; but he had become expert at killing little men whom he had persuaded to default for large sums, and had justified his conduct by the vastness of his aim.

Clearly there are social difficulties in remaining the same age. Friends expect one to wither a little as the years creep by. In practice *Thackeray* had had frequently to change his identity. There are also grave objections to glowing like a beacon in the dark,

which is apparently what happens when you have been toting radium water for a long time. This, with an honourable and no doubt well-grounded feeling that no girl would wish to grow old beside an ageless

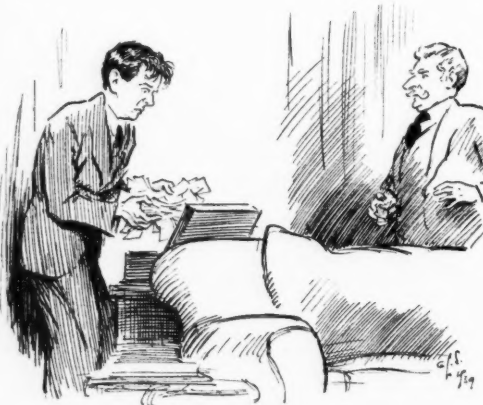


THUMBS UP AT THE YARD

Detective-Inspector Palmer . . . MR. GEORGE BUTLER
Superintendent Warren . . . MR. MICHAEL SHEPLEY
Betty Ryan MISS ANN TODD

husband, had prevented him from marrying.

At the moment of the play he is in love with *Betty Ryan*, the daughter of



DIRGE IN DUD NOTES

John Thackeray MR. LESLIE BANKS
Dr. Ludwig Weisz MR. MALCOLM KEEN

the Home Secretary. He is also at the end of one of his cycles, and renewal is urgent. His old friend, *Doctor Weisz*, who knows his secret, has arrived to

superintend the operation, and a trusted clerk named *Mr. Budd* has been encouraged to rob his employers. Apart from a slight hitch over the blood-group of a willing valet, everything seems set for a ninth successful murder in the name of science when the police, confirmed in their suspicions by the fact that a portrait of *Betty* painted by *Thackeray* exhibits tricks last played by a painter long before in Breslau, get busy. They plant dud notes for *Mr. Budd* to steal, and they come and arrest a rapidly ageing *Thackeray*.

This is not so exciting as the same author's *The Amazing Doctor Clitterhouse*, and after the big dramatic moment of the discovery of the blank notes the Third Act tails away without further surprise. I felt at times that in Half Moon Street there was too much talk and not enough action. I longed, perhaps unworthily, to see for myself what acid did to *Mr. Budd*. Yet the play is on the whole cleverly worked out and it is handled so adroitly that it should be safe for a good run.

Mr. Banks is very sure in his touch; it is a pleasure to watch him stealing our sympathy in spite of ourselves. At the end the way in which he passes in a few minutes from forty to old age is very skilful. As poor little *Mr. Budd*, seizing what he thinks is his one great chance of adventure, *Mr. Morland Graham* gives an outstanding and most imaginative performance. Miss ANN TODD's appearances are regrettably few, the old German doctor is robustly taken by *Mr. Malcolm Keen*, *Mr. Michael Shepley* gives an amusing portrait of a police superintendent to whom fingerprints are a religion, and *Mr. Leslie Dwyer* holds a telling brief for cat-burglars.

Wise doctors will rub up their supra-renal lore. Pertinent questions are going to flow.

ERIC.

"THE FAMILY REUNION" (WESTMINSTER)

Mr. T. S. Eliot's The Family Reunion achieves in a masterly fashion an effect of limpid depth. In the foreground is a family group, an English country-house family reunion, the different characters, uncles and aunts, well and sharply observed. But this setting is only the foreground. Through it the poet takes us to look

into the real depths of human nature, to show us how the superficial and apparent relationships and actions are not reality, and, in the central character of *Harry, Lord Monchensey* (Mr. MICHAEL REDGRAVE), to show us the real life of the human soul living in a world peopled by other beings and under influences drawn from afar.

For these purposes a family with a full domestic life and many traditions and memories has been most skilfully chosen, representing in little the social framework and social pressure in which the human individual lives out his earthly existence. *Harry* is not only partly conscious in fields where most people have no consciousness at all, he also carries a special share of the evil inheritance of man, while the uncles and aunts and his mother are given too little interior life of their own. But the confusion for one evening's entertainment would have been intolerable if they were not so grouped and limited, and treated not as ends in themselves but as a setting in which we concentrate upon the central figure of the head of the house.

The evil which afflicts *Harry*, which has made him murder his wife, seems at first the more oppressive from being a social inheritance, but in the turning-point of the play the driven man turns from flight to pursuit as he realises that the fatalistic character of this evil also means that it is not essential to himself and that there is in himself the possibility of facing and opposing it.

We are led to think that his rôle is limited to that of expiation, that when he leaves the family home it is not to find any long lodging anywhere else on earth. His mother (Miss HELEN HAYE) has imagined that he can find his life in the life of the country-house which she has kept going for him and from which she has herself drawn vitality as well as conferring it. But, in fact, Wishwood, being the embodiment of the family, is also the embodiment of the burden of family sin. Here, as in innumerable points, the country-house of a well-to-do family is a symbol of larger societies which nourish man but which also

maintain and carry in themselves dark legacies.

The language passes easily from conversation to a free verse which proves in Mr. ELIOT's hands adequate to the most difficult tasks. When *Harry* is



CHILDHOOD REMINISCENCES

Harry, Lord Monchensey. MR. MICHAEL REDGRAVE
Mary. MISS RUTH LODGE

despairing of conveying at all to his relations the special stress which weighs upon him he exclaims that there must be some way of making

language convey meaning; and Mr. ELIOT, who has felt the difficulty, has mastered it. Except at one or two moments, as when the Eumenides appear, the transition from a country-house dialogue, often very entertaining on the plane of comedy, through acute observation of human relationships, to the high expression of spiritual truths is always natural and easy—the natural and the supernatural are never allowed to be two distinct worlds. The verse is packed with meaning and matter for thought, and it holds the attention through an evening in which there is little dramatic action. Most of the characters are assembled and displayed rather than used; they are not essential tools in the construction of the piece.

It would be easy to go to this play and to come away disappointed, reflecting that IBSEN, for example, never considered the depth of his themes as conferring an exemption from a dramatist's business of telling a story—and a story with suspense in it. But here the characters atone for the circumscribed action by the wide range and memorable distinction of the lines they speak.

Whether it is, as one line phrases it, "the low conversation of triumphant aunts" (though the aunts have little triumph) or the descriptions of his master which the faithful chauffeur *Downing* (Mr. ROBERT HARRIS) is called upon to make, there is no character, except perhaps *Sergeant Winchell* (Mr. CHARLES VICTOR), who is not endowed from the poet's store with moments of perception and powers of language which arrest the attention and stir the mind.

The assembled family, in their smaller way, do illustrate the central truth which it is Mr. MICHAEL REDGRAVE's achievement to illustrate in the person of *Harry*—the lot of fallen man and his need for grace, the way there is in each human life a vast past inheritance, at once a support and a menace, to be met and mastered, vicarious suffering and personal redemption. It is a difficult but a most rewarding evening, in which Miss CATHERINE LACEY and Miss RUTH LODGE in particular play distinguished parts. D. W.



THE FAMILY CHORUS AND THE MATRIARCH

The Hon. Charles Piper MR. E. MARTIN BROWNE
Violet MISS MARJORIE GABAIN
Ivy MISS HENZIE RAEBURN
Col. the Hon. Gerald Piper . . . MR. COLIN KEITH-JOHNSTON
Amy, Dowager Lady Monchensey. MISS HELEN HAYE



"What time do we 'ave to be 'ere to see 'em bury their 'eads in the sand?"

Major Road Ahead

THE tramp came aboard as the country was beginning to show through the hideous pink fringes of London. He looked like a tramp, anyway.

"Is this your caravan?" he asked, having made himself as comfortable as he could in the other corner of the driving-seat.

"It is not," I told him, "it belongs to a man I am beginning to dislike, who suggested if I cared for a little holiday I could drive it down to Sussex for him. When I accepted I was under the impression that thirty or forty miles a day was nothing to a good horse. I now know how wrong I was."

"Have you any idea why he is moaning so?" asked the tramp, lighting a short black pipe.

"None," I said, "he started it as soon as we left the town behind. But

his general health seems good. Do you know about horses?"

"Nothing at all. I am a man for whom the horse has never had more than a passing message, and that invariably a losing one. Could he be hungry?"

"Hardly. He had a large breakfast at the hotel where we were forced to spend the night."

"I notice it is all you can do to keep him from pulling us into the left-hand ditch. Why is that?"

"I have no idea," I told him, "unless it is some primitive political bias. It has never left him since we started out yesterday morning, and whatever it is my right arm is growing very tired of it."

The spring sun, striking us warmly, caused my passenger to take off his ancient green hat and open his tattered jacket. We smoked in silence for some

minutes, during which the moaning of the horse grew embarrassing. He was a huge brown creature with shaggy white spats and a chest like a locomotive's boiler.

"You do not think he could be dying of thirst?" asked the tramp dreamily.

"He drank several buckets of water at breakfast," I said.

"There is a pond. Let us offer him a drink, in case."

I steered over to the edge of the pond and stopped. The horse glared at it vacantly and went on moaning.

"What is his name?" asked the tramp, getting down.

"At the stables where my friend hired him they called him Herbert."

The tramp walked round to the front and looked him squarely in the eyes.

"Herbert," he said gravely, "this

moaning of yours is all that is wrong with a most beautiful day. You look as sound as a bell to me. For our sake take a good long pull at this pond and see if that helps."

Herbert remained a sad, sad horse. "A most interesting thought has occurred to me," the tramp cried suddenly. "Have you a bucket?"

I fished one out from the back and gave it to him. He filled it and held it up to Herbert, who seemed startled but drank it almost empty. The tramp then tugged at Herbert's chin-strap and made him amble over to where, comfortably head-high on the bank, grew a patch of rich grass. Herbert eyed it without interest, but when the tramp pulled a fat handful of it and pushed it under his nose, he ate greedily. He still made no attempt, however, to eat it off the bank, and at that moment, a cow thrusting her head over the hedge and uttering a low moo of welcome, he sprang into the air and stood quivering, his hairy ears quite flat and his eyes distorted with terror.

"Who would have believed it?" cried the tramp. "We are privileged to be present at the first visit to the country of an absolutely urban horse. His moaning is simply a lament for the stink and hubbub of the city. It may pass when you have been on the road a week or so."

"Thank you," I muttered.

"I used," he added, as we got under way again, "to be able to give an imitation of a motor-smash in a crowded street."

"Please try it," I begged.

For a minute or so he rehearsed silently and then, without any warning, began. I shut my eyes and the powerful stream of sound which poured out beside me conjured up a vivid and horrible scene. The scream of tyres, the harsh tearing of metal, the rushing and shouting of a large crowd, even an impatient tram, everything was there. I opened my eyes and saw that we had stopped. The horse Herbert stood galvanised with ecstasy. His ears were cocked and his moaning had given place to a deep chesty purr.

"I had better stop," said the tramp, "before he falls into a trance. I am afraid I must leave you now, for I must be getting on, but there is one other little experiment I should like to try." And he broke into a raucous shout of "Coal-ho! Prime Derbies! Kitchen nuts!"

The effect on Herbert was instantaneous. He turned round to gaze as if the tramp summed up for him all that was good and precious in the world.

"We know now why he tries to pull us into a non-existent kerb," the tramp remarked. "Well, thank you for a fascinating morning. I see a gramophone inside. If I were you I should buy one of those records of city noises and use it freely."

"Before you go," I said, "my friend has packed some beer in the back."

As the words left me we pulled up dead in our tracks, and Herbert's ears, which had begun to droop, again shot up.

"Did you see that?" I cried.

"I did, and I am amazed. I have always thought well of coal-heavers, but I never suspected their generosity went so far."

"How much would you say he ought to have?" I asked.

"If we take a pint as a reasonable starting-point for a man, his weight-ratio would suggest something like a gallon."

"It sounds a lot," I said. "Shall we say a quart?"

"On such a lovely day," murmured the tramp, "I think he should have two." ERIC.

Wham!

"In spite of his work Ciano enjoys his job. He likes exchanging stories with visiting diplomats and he loves striking poses and photographers."—*Oxford Mail*.



"... and then we got to the long 15th ..."

Pages From My Life

Under the Greenwood Tree

THERE comes a moment, I suppose, in the life of every man who has driven his plough along the river of life, through storm and shine, through shipwreck and calm in pursuit of the mirage of happiness, when he comes at last to a cross-roads. He is faced with a decision: not to labour the metaphor, he must either go backward or forward, or turn right or left, or strike off across country, or stay where he is. Even the rare individual who rejects all these alternatives has but one resource left: he must take spade and pickaxe and descend step by step into the ground.

For me the moment of decision came late. To be exact it came one Sunday afternoon in the year 1926. I shall never forget it. I had an old friend of mine at the house that afternoon—Sam Turnkey, a big bluff Yorkshireman with all the reckless caution of his race and possessed in addition of a fine baritone voice. More to the point, he was a confirmed hater of modern civilisation in all its aspects. Indeed there was something primitive, something earthy about the man himself. In a big department store he was often heard to say that he would as soon use the staircase as the lift. He could imitate the screech of an owl by cracking his finger-joints, and often on a country walk with him I have been amazed by his ability to distinguish fine and wet weather. By profession he was a designer of cigar-boxes.

Listening to his talk, which had something of the careless profusion of Nature herself, I suddenly found

myself wondering whether my life up to that moment had not after all been a mistake. Though I had been, to coin a phrase, born and bred in the country, I had spent most of my life in cities. Now the artificiality, the essentially *urban* nature of city life came home to me with a rush. I felt a longing to escape, to return to the life of Nature.

Sam Turnkey must have guessed what I was thinking, for he suddenly leaned towards me, his face shining with excitement.

"Why shouldn't we do it?" he asked. "Why shouldn't we get away from it all? You and I?"

"Do what?" I asked, puzzled for a moment. "Get away from what? Who?"

"Back to Nature," he said. In his excitement he strode up and down the room kicking over chairs and tables. Then I understood. I was as excited as he was now. Before he left that day he had shown me how to light a camp-fire on my dining-room carpet.

So in a very few words our decision was taken. We were to escape from civilisation. Only one question remained: where were we to go? I think we should have been held up by this problem indefinitely if it had not been for Sam Turnkey's sturdy commonsense. He put the matter in the hands of a firm of estate-agents, stipulating only that they should find some remote spot where two old hermits could set up camp and spend the remainder of their days. A few days later he came in boyish jubilation

to tell me that the place was found. It was a large wood on the outskirts of London.

I was enchanted with Sunkham Wood from that first afternoon when we alighted from our taxi amid its solitudes and pitched our tent by a running stream. All round stretched leafy glades and fields, except on three sides, where there was a new housing estate. That night as we sat by the camp-fire, with tankards of beer and whipped-cream in our hands, Sam Turnkey sang a Yorkshire folk-song called "Bank Manager O' Dreams." As he sang I listened to the silence, which seemed to wrap us round like a veritable pipe of peace.

As the weeks passed I knew that I had found out at last what it was to live. It was wonderful to lie awake in the early morning watching the sunset; to listen all day to the sound of the bees buzzing in the waste-paper-basket. We must have made a couple of picturesque if rather unkempt figures in our pin-striped suits and quiet ties. In the first flush of our escape from civilisation we shaved only twice a day.

I AM afraid it was really too wonderful to last. It was not long before strained relations developed between us, whether owing to Sam Turnkey's habit of singing Yorkshire folk-songs from morning till night, day in and day out, or owing to some fault on my side, I cannot say. We drifted into a concealed animosity which never came to the surface but revealed itself in countless little ways. Often enough, for instance, when one of us was sitting by the camp-fire the other would come up behind and land a heavy blow with a log of wood, and we were perpetually tripping each other up when we went to fetch water from the stream. Sam Turnkey spent a good deal of time ostentatiously sawing off the barrel of a shotgun.

Matters came to a head when for want of anything else to do we took up bird-watching. Any day of the week now we might have been seen, at some distance from our encampment, standing absolutely still and trying with the help of some old mackintoshes and a little grease-proof paper to look as much like tree-trunks as possible. But here we came up against an unexpected difficulty. There was only one bird in Sunkham Wood. What its species was I never determined, though I think it was either a Yellow-tailed Blowlamp or a Speckled Night-porter. However that may be, the fact that there was only one bird made it inevitable that whenever we went bird-





"Yes, that's my 'usband's 'air in this locket."

"I didn't know your 'usband 'ad gorn, Mrs. Green."

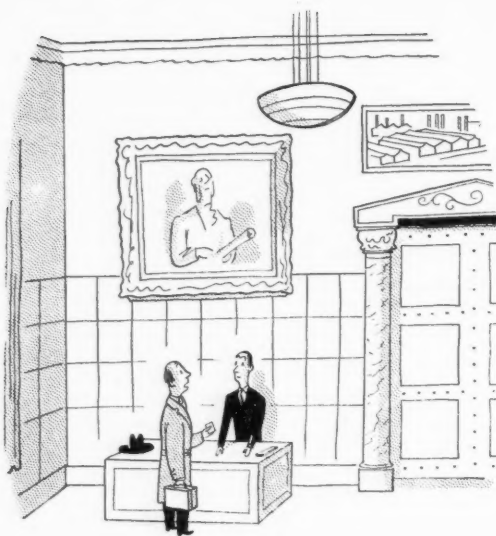
"'E ain't, but 'is 'air 'as."

watching we had to watch the same bird. I am sorry to say that this annoyed Sam Turnkey excessively. Several times he pushed me and even the bird roughly to one side, exclaiming that it was not fair and that he had seen it first. For many days together we were not on speaking terms.

BUT this idyllic life of communion with Nature was destined to end as suddenly as it had begun. We had

noticed for some time that the nearby housing estate was being gradually extended in our direction. Several times, too, lorries containing building materials ran through our encampment, putting out our fire and squashing our tent and equipment flat; and we noticed that as time went on there was a tendency for men with spades to come and dig up the very ground we were standing on. But we had come to accept these phenomena as part of our woodland solitude.

All the same we were both rather surprised when we woke up one noon-day from a heavy sleep to find ourselves no longer by our camp-fire but in the sitting-room of a small semi-detached house. We looked round the bare walls, then our glances met and we shook hands in silence. In our hearts I am not sure we did not both think the change for the better. Quietly accepting the inevitable, we went out and bought some rolls of wallpaper.



"Tell Sir Mortimer I have an invention which will completely revolutionise his entire industry and you can also use it as a pipe-rack."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

L'Impératrice Eugénie

A TYPICAL French biography, graceful, vigorous, restrained, has been bestowed on *Eugénie, Empress of the French* (COLDEN-SANDERSON, 16/-), by M. OCTAVE AUBRY. M. AUBRY modestly claims to have merely soldered together as imperceptibly as possible every noteworthy fragment of this dramatic life. But there is a refinement of choice and stress in his use of material old and new that renders this particular biography exceptionally distinguished. A sympathetic but not a blind admirer of the political EUGÉNIE, who, called to play a man's part, wished herself she had been a man, M. AUBRY allots her no more responsibility than the rest of France—and no less—for the disasters of 1870. Only the Emperor, he insists, stood for peace. The adventurous escape from the Tuileries is finely told; and the long exile, with its courageous handling of hard times, comes as a gallant echo of the frugal and generous youth of Mlle. DE MONTJO. French first, from the moment of her crowning, EUGÉNIE proclaimed Armistice Day her "first day in Paradise"; and when CLEMENCEAU heard the *Te Deum* in Strasburg Cathedral on the same victorious occasion it was at the urging of LOUIS NAPOLEON'S widow.

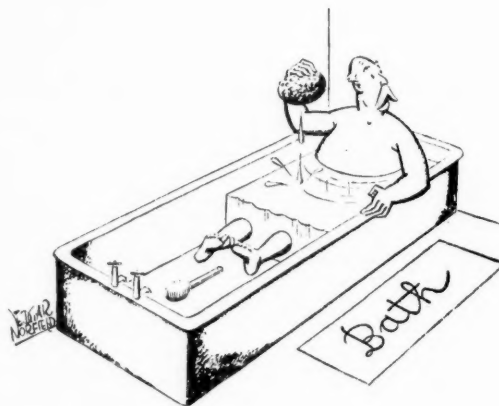
Grave Issues

Professor R. W. SETON-WATSON regards the events of last September's crisis as an affair of five ultimatums—two from Germany to this country and allied France, three

from the Allies to Czecho-Slovakia. Notwithstanding that peace was in fact preserved he sees nothing but defeat, disaster and everlastingly galling disgrace in it, with the side that held the better cards maddeningly outplayed. His only difficulty while writing *Munich and the Dictators* (METHUEN, 5/-) in terms of bitter national discredit and unsparing condemnation of the British and French leaders has been to keep pace with the march of events, and no doubt the final dismemberment appeals to him as a process of mastication inevitably following that closing of the wolf's jaws that might have been prevented. That there were underlying factors, such as the relative vulnerability to air attack of different countries at various dates which could not be freely discussed in the Commons debate, probably the writer would agree, but he would still assert that, at whatever possible price, the free countries of the world should have made their stand beside President BENES. Whether or no his judgment be sound, his call for the future brings him into line with every responsible thinker independent of creed or party.

Leonardo, Universal Provider

There are, one suspects, two answers to the question why *Leonardo da Vinci* (GOLLANCZ, 12/6) has gained in esteem as a painter and rather faded out as a precocious inventor of aeroplanes, gas-shells, shrapnel, tanks and such comparatively harmless gadgets as diving-suits and portable houses. The obvious one is that he carried painting further than most men have done and left the results of his scientific research rudimentary. But perhaps the chief reason why his career, apart from its artistic triumphs, is cumulatively disappointing is because it exhibits the rather naïve universal curiosity of his mediæval fore-runners without their co-ordinating principles. Madame ANTONINA VALLENTIN sub-entitles her brilliant biography of LEONARDO "The Tragic Pursuit of Perfection"—which was exactly, painting apart, the path which on her own showing LEONARDO made little pretence of following. But the lavish detail with which she has painted his material circumstances in Florence, Milan, Rome and Amboise, the care with which she has depicted his handicapped youth and harassed maturity, explain more accurately than her own rather subjective comments the real tragedy of that great and warped intelligence.



"Greenwood, my bath is only half-full of water!"

"Talk of Many Things"

Only the most curmudgeonly soul could fail to enjoy the spectacle of Sir EDWARD MARSH in his autobiography, *A Number of People* (HEINEMANN and HAMISH HAMILTON, 15/-), metaphorically purring as he licks from his whiskers the choice cream of his memories of social and artistic London during the last fifty years. The cat simile can be carried no further, for there is little spitefulness in these memoirs, and his damns when he is driven to them are so faint as to be almost inaudible. This is a happy book, by a man who is obviously a past-master of the art of making interesting friends—and keeping them—and many of the great young men of his times appear in its pages. Moreover Sir EDWARD is an amateur, in the most loving sense, not only of poems and pictures but of that *mot juste* which has become the hall-mark of English humour. There may be a chestnut or two among his store of anecdotes, but the majority—and their name is legion—are delightful stuff, and quite unfamiliar. Altogether he introduces his readers to a number of very pleasant people and many most entertaining ideas.

Mexican Nightpiece

This time last year Mr. GRAHAM GREENE, disgusted with the "chromium world" of industrialism, penetrated some of the least penetrable parts of Mexico to see how their peasants reacted to the "Red" ban on religion. For Mexico demonstrates rather more crudely than elsewhere the tussle here staged between blue-chinned politicians on balconies and the devout poor with their incurable passion for worship. Starting at Nuevo Laredo the explorer got quickly to Mexico City. The grimmer part of the quest began when he sailed from Vera Cruz in a derelict barge to Frontera at the bottom of the Mexican Gulf and traversed, mainly on mule-back, the god-forsaken state of Tabasco. Mr. GREENE has a quick eye and a vivid *pointilliste* manner, and when, incidentally, he encounters a site as beautiful as Palenque he does it memorable justice. But *The Lawless Roads* (LONGMANS, 10/6) exhibits him first and foremost as a pioneer of the spirit who prefers "supernatural promise" to "petty social fulfilment." The nightmare quality in his theme needs no enhancing—it is there; and he has written with sincerity and justice—and with an ulterior hopefulness which is in process of vindication—an extremely interesting book.



INDIRECT ORATION

"OH, IF YOU PLEASE, MUM, THERE'S NO MEAT FOR DINNER. THE BUTCHER 'AS BEEN AND GONE AND NEVER COME THIS MORNING!"

Phil May, April 9th, 1902.

The Earlier L. G.

The *terminus ad quem* of Lloyd George: 1863-1914 (CONSTABLE, 12/6) has a significance beyond its obvious

convenience. Its author, Mr. W. WATKIN DAVIES, believes that his subject's best work had been done or ever the War came, that he reached his apogee, indeed, in 1910; and had he continued his story, what is in the main a eulogy, though never an uncritical one, would have become something quite different. More than once he openly laments a lost leader, corrupted by undesirable associates; for Mr. DAVIES is a Radical "in the fearless old fashion," and carries us back with enthusiasm to those dim but exciting days when old age pensions and national insurance, the People's Budget and the Parliament Bill aroused passions which are now hard to realise. Remoter still is that gallant (if conceivably mistaken) campaign against the South African War and its promoters; and Mr. DAVIES has things to say about JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN and Lord MILNER which are calculated to make elderly Tories grow pink about the gills. But he is an able and persuasive writer, and has little difficulty in presenting his hero as a man of true magnanimity and authentic eloquence—no mere purveyor of claptrap, even at Limehouse. Best of all is the picture of Mr. LLOYD GEORGE's early years in Wales and the analysis of the influences which moulded him, for here Mr. DAVIES speaks with exceptional authority and without the bias of his later pages.

Education by a Deaf Mute

The novels of Mr. OLIVER ONIONS are always worth reading. He has a pleasantly distinctive note of his own, contriving to suggest something mysterious and vaguely alarming under the mask of a sober narrative. In much the same way did the late ANSTEY GUTHRIE enhance his comic effects by selecting the most commonplace characters as his protagonists. The central figure here, in *The Hand of Kornelius Voyt* (HAMISH HAMILTON, 7/6), is a deaf mute who has developed in order to overcome his handicap remarkable powers of thought transference. The Herr Doktor, who is also a master of chess and an extraordinary performer at billiards, had been an old friend of the narrator's father, who dies in the opening chapter and appoints him guardian of his only son. The *Voyt* system of education is sufficiently strange. At first young *Peter Byles* is placed under the tutelage of the precise and methodical *Heinrich*, a blond and amiable German who might be a cousin of the young tutor in *Mr. Brilling's* household, who teaches him among other things the deaf-and-dumb alphabet. But not much use is made of this: *Herr Kornelius* soon manages to establish a sort of mental rapport with his ward, and the education proceeds with rapidity if not with perfect smoothness until the German tutor is dismissed and the boy—he is only thirteen but

very big for his age—comes under the sole influence of his guardian. The climax comes—it would be unfair to describe exactly how—and *Peter* has a page or two of Bohemian life, for which his education has hardly fitted him, before finding sanctuary and sitting down to write his story.

Conversation Piece

Even for the present time, when the eulogies of book-reviewers mount in such a crescendo of uncritical extravagance as has never before been known, some enterprising claims have been made for the novels of Miss I. COMPTON-BURNETT. Her last book induced in one reviewer the opinion that she was "probably the purest and most original of contemporary English artists," and in another the view that "her characters have more wit than any

other collection of characters one can think of since Congreve"; while a third was moved to the point of stating that "there are two great makers of comedy who write in English: Mr. Bernard Shaw and Miss Compton-Burnett." After reading her latest novel, *A Family and a Fortune* (GOLLANCZ, 7/6), Mr. Punch's Learned Clerk can only confess himself surprised. It is true that her English is exact, that she is obviously a careful craftsman, and that her particular piece of literary country, the close analysis, carried out mainly in stilted dialogue, of the motives and shifting relationships of a tediously self-conscious family, is untrodden in England; but at least to this reviewer it seems that the domestic ironies revealed have not enough either of wit or significance to justify

so laborious a structure of formalised talk. The only character who appeared to him to earn his place consistently was the sententious little boy, *Aubrey*. As others think so differently, however, it would be only fair to give this novel a trial.

An Event

Mr. G. C. DRINKWATER, who rowed for Oxford in 1902 and 1903, proves himself a commendable chronicler and compiler of *Boat Race* (BLACKIE, 6/-). Beginning with information about "The Making of a Blue," he proceeds in a chapter full of interest to relate the "Early History of the Race," and then goes on to discuss rowing at Oxford and Cambridge down through the years to the present day. Finally, in an Appendix, students of statistics and so forth can find material enough to keep them browsing for many hours. A foreword by Lord DESBOROUGH and some pictures thoroughly worthy of reproduction are included in this useful and authoritative volume.



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